

**AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT**

Please amend the Abstract on page 34 as follows:

A pipeline closing apparatus comprises a lid member attachable to a downstream end portion of a sluice valve, a first control shaft-8 extending through the lid member, a second control shaft 9-extending through the first control shaft-8, an elastic annular member 12-disposed between pressing plates 10 and 11-provided on inward end regions of the control shafts 8 and 9 and elastically deformable to a diameter-increased position by being clamped and pressed, thereby to block between an inner peripheral surface of a branch pipe and the pressing plates, and a retaining device. ~~D provided between the inward end region of the second control shaft 9 and the upstream pressing plate 11 and including~~The retaining device includes engaging link pairs 13 and 14-flexing and bulging to a diameter-increased position in response to outward sliding movement of the second control shaft 9-relative to the first control shaft-8. The apparatus further comprises a reversal preventing device F which, ~~when the engaging link pairs 13 and 14 of the retaining device are stretched to a diameter-reduced position,~~ contacts and limits the engaging link pairs 13 and 14 to an outwardly bent position where flexing pivotal portions of the engaging link pairs 13 and 14 project radially outward.